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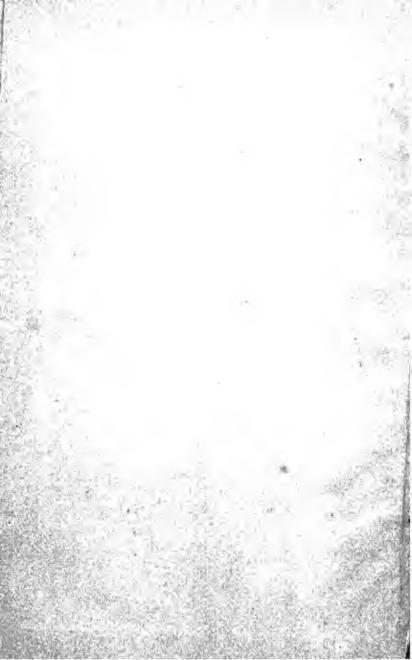
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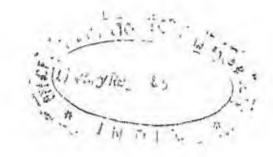
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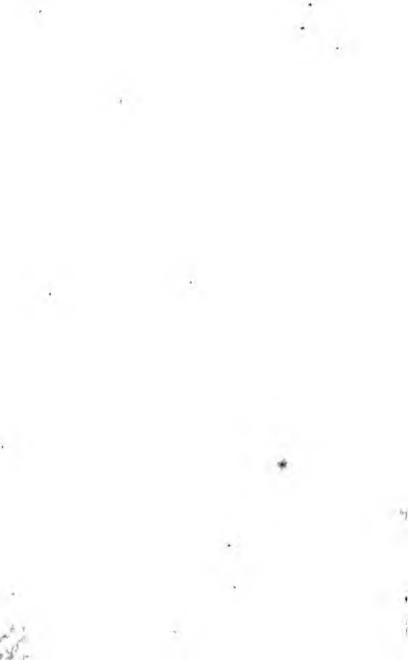






# THE SHRINES OF SITAKUND.





THE 2649

## SHRINES OF SITAKUND

IN THE DISTRICT OF

### CHITTAGONG IN BENGAL

BY

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WHO HAS BEEN MORE THAN A FATHER TO ME.

THESE PAGES ARE DEDICATED

As a Token of my gratefulness, and of my reverence for his genius and learning.

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## PREFACE.

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I visited Sitakund in 1880, during the Siva-Chaturdasi festival. From the notes then recorded by me, I wrote a paper on the Shrines of the place, which was read before the Asiatic Society of Bengal on the 2nd March, 1881. This paper, with some additions and alterations, is now presented before the public.

It was owing to the kindness of the late Pandit Bhairava Chandra Nyayaratna of Chittagong, that I was able to obtain copies of some of the sacred writings to which reference is made in the following pages. To my old and revered tutor, Pandit Haris Chandra Kaviratna, of the Presidency College, my thanks are also due for his kindly going through the proofsheets, and helping me with his suggestions.

A. S.

Calcutta, June 15th, 1884.



### SHRINES OF SITAKUND.



Sítákund is an outpost in the Police circle of Kumiria attached to the Sudder Subdivision of the district of Chittagong in Bengal. It is bounded on the east by the Sitakund range, on the west by the Bay of Bengal, on the north and south by the Kumiria and Merkaserai thanas respectively, the population by the last Census being 36,581 souls.

The city of the same name (lat. 22° 37' 55"; long. 91° 43′ 40″), which is at a distance of 24 miles to the north of the Sudder Station, is not mentioned by name in the Ayeen Akbery; but it appears to have been a place of considerable importance at the time when Chittagong first came into the possession of the English. Mr. Harry Verelst, the first Chief of Chittagong, who afterwards succeeded Mr. Vansittart in the Governorship of Bengal, reported his arrival from this place on the 3rd January, 1761.\* Lord

<sup>\*</sup> Mr. Cotton's Memorandum on the Revenue History of Chittagong, page 5.

Teignmouth visited it in 1778,\* and Sir William Jones in 1786.† It was also inspected and described by Captain Pogson in 1831,‡ and Sir Joseph Hooker in 1854.5 Sitakund still continues to hold its position as a place of note in the district. It has a moonsifes of its own, which, though still going by its name, has, however, been recently removed to an adjacent place. The trade of Sitakund is not inconsiderable, lying as it does on the Grand Trunk Road between Dacca and Chittagong, which is always fit for wheeled traffic, and being accessible within a short distance by boats throughout the year. There is not certainly a more beautiful place on earth. Nature has adorned it with all that is sublime and beautiful in creation. It is a meet residence for gods. The grand mountains, the beautiful waterfalls, the volcanic springs, the clear streams, the thick forests, and their conflagrations at night, the numberless odorous flowers, the fragrant breeze and the sweet song of birds,-these no one can forget, who has once been there.

Lord Teignmouth's Memoirs of Sir William Jones, Vol. II, p. 55.

<sup>+</sup> Ibid. Letter from Sir William Jones to Mr. Justice Hyde.

<sup>‡</sup> Pogson's Narrative during a Tour to Chateegaon, p. 204. The date of Pogson's visit to Sitakund, as given by the late Dr. Oldham, quoting Corbyn, in his paper on the Thermal Springs of India edited by his son, is 1778. (Vide p. 59, Part II, Vol. XIX. Memoirs of the Geological Survey of India.) But this is not correct, as will be seen from Captain Pogson's own Narrative. It was Lord Teignmouth who visited the place in 1778.

<sup>§</sup> Hooker's Himalayan Journals, Vol. II, p. 352.

It is, however, from a religious point of view, that the place is held in the greatest esteem. In Eastern Bengal, which is condemned by the orthodox as the Mleçcha country, not visited by the Pándavas (पाडवर्गनेतरेश), there is no place so renowned as Sitakund. It is one of the 51 sacred Pithas (पीड),\* on which fell scattered the limbs of Sati, the consort of Siva, whose dead body was cut to pieces by the discus of Vishnu. "On Chandrasekhara in Chittagong in Eastern Bengal," says the Adipurána,† "there is a place of great sanctity, which

चहते दत्तवाक्तमें भैरवयन्त्रशेखरः। व्यक्तद्भगा भगवती भवानी तत्र देवता ॥ दति तन्त्रचुड़ामणी शिवपार्व्यद्वीसंवादे

एक पञ्चाम हिन्दो समी पीटनिर्णयः।

Vide Sir Raja Radhakanta Deva's Sabdakalpadruma, Vol. III, p. 2150, and Vol. VII, p. 702 (supplement) 1st Edition.

> চউপামে ডানিহন্ত অর্ভ অনুষ্ঠ । ভবানী দেবতা চন্দ্রশেশর ভৈরব ॥

> > ভারতচন্দ্র রায়ের অন্নদামঙ্গল। উক্রবারের ১ম নিশা পালা।

Date of composition of Annadámangala, S. 1674=1753 A. D.

বেদ লয়ে থাষি রুসে ব্রহ্ম নিরুপিলা। সেই শকে এই গীত ভারত রুচিলা॥

† देवाभिस्त्रपितं चेषं वक्षप्राक् चास्ति ग्रेसको । स्रतिमुद्धां महत्युष्यं चहती चन्द्रमेखरे ॥

A'dipurána, Vide, p. 105 Chandrasekhara Máhátmya by Uma Charan Mookerjea. is the favourite and secret resort of the gods." "We have heard before," the Rishis said in the Devipurana,\* "of Sitakund situate on the mount of Chandrasekhara, a spring known throughout India, which is the purifier of the three worlds". "Ayodhya, Muttra, Maya (Hurdwar), Benares, Kanchi (Conjeveram), Avanti (Ojjein), and Dwaraka—these seven places are the dispensers of salvation. In Benares, Mainaka, Ekamravana (Bhubanesvara), Kailas and Sumeru, Siva constantly dwells. During the Kali Yuga," says Vishnu to his consort, in the Varahi Tantra,† "Chittagong is the habitation of the gods." So again Siva said in the Linga Purana,‡ "I shall dwell with thee,O

सीताकुष्यं त्रृतं पूर्वं वेतीक्यजनपावनं ।
 सन्द्रशेखरमध्यसं भारताख्यासमन्वितम् ॥
 इति चीदेवीपुराणे चैनमासाक्ष्ये चित्रसम्बद्धः
 कथने त्रीत्रीचन्द्रसेखरप्राप्तिरद्याद्योऽध्यायः ।

† क्याधा मयुरा माया कासी काकी कविनका।
पुरी दारावती चैव प्रीता मुक्तिदायिकाः॥
वारावसी च मैनाक रकाधवनमेव च।
कैसापरजनादिक सर्वादिष्टकपचकः॥
रतेषु सङ्गरे। नित्यं वसेदेवीयमन्त्रितः।
कसी स्थानस सर्वेषां देवानां चहले प्रभे॥

इति श्रीवाराचीतन्त्रं श्रीनारायणनारायणीर्धवादे स्तीयः पठवः ।

‡ कीकानाच दितार्थीय नहासे पन्द्रशेषरे। स्वया सच विष्यामि सत्यं सत्यं वरानने॥

Linga Purana, Vide. p. 105, Chandrasekhara Máhátmya by Uma Charan Mookesjea. fair-faced one, on Chandrasekhara in Bengal for the good of men." The sanctity of the shrines of Sitakund is a favourite theme with the writers of the Puranas and Tantras, and passages bearing on the subject need not be multiplied. The shrines attract pilgrims from all parts of Bengal, Behar, and Orissa, as also from the North-Western Provinces. The Siva-Chaturdasí festival, according to Dr. Hunter,\* is attended by ten to twenty thousand pilgrims. The minor gatherings, at the eclipses of the sun and moon, and at like occasions, number from two to four thousand devotees.

The leading works which treat of these shrines are (1) Devipurána, (2) Váráhí Tantra, (3) Chinnamastá Tantra. Passing mention of them may also be found in the following works: Adipurana, Linga Purana, A'di Brahma Purana, Churámani Tantra, Yogini Tantra, Váyu Purana, Bhavishya Purana, Tantrasára, and Kálímáhátmya. A passage " असनाय-यन्त्रवाध्यन्त्रमेखरपन्ते"is generally referred to the Amarakosha. In Colebrooke's excellent edition of the Dictionary. I searched for the passage in vain, but have succeeded in tracing it to the Mahálingesvara Tantra in the prayer of a hundred names addressed to Siva. The exact age, in which the aforesaid Tantras and Puranas were written, cannot be ascertained. According to Dr. Monier Williams, "if the oldest known Purana is not older than the sixth or

<sup>\*</sup> Vide Hunter's Statistical Account of Chittagong, p. 232.

seventh century, an earlier date can scarcely be attributed to the oldest known Tantra."\* There is no mention of Chittagong, or of the shrines of Sitakund, either in the Rámáyana, or in the Mahábhárata. According to Dr. Hunter, there is mention in the latter epic of Trilochana, a powerful king of Tipperah, who is supposed to have been contemporary with Yudhishthira; but I have failed to trace it, though I came across two passages which speak of the conquest of that kingdom by Sahadeva and Karna.t We also know that the early kings of Tipperah were staunch Sivaites, and that a portion of the expenses of the Sitakund shrines is still defrayed by the Tipperah Raj. & Dr. Hunter | has also informed . us, that "in 1512 the Tipperah General conquered Chittagong." But when these shrines, now so cele-

\* Dr. Momer Wilhams's Indian Wisdom, page 504.

† Hunter's Statistical Account of Hill Tipperah, page 464.

‡ नैपुरं खबमे काला राजानसभितीजसम् । निजमाद मदावांक्रसरमा पौरवेश्वरम्॥ ५८॥ द्रति सभापवेणि दिग्विजयपवेणि सददेवदिग्विजये एकविंग्रतमेऽध्यायः।

भोत्तनं पतन्त्रीय त्रिपुरां कोमलां तथा ।
रतान् सर्वान् विनिर्जित्य करमादाय सर्वेगः ॥ १ ॥
दिचिषां दिसमास्याय कर्षी जिला मचारथान् ।
दिक्षणं दान्तिषात्रेषु योधयामास स्त्रतजः ॥ १० ॥
दत्यारक्षके पर्वेषि घोषयानापर्वेषि कर्णदिग्विजये
विपद्माग्रद्धिकदिम्ततमें।ऽध्यायः ।

§ Baboo Kailas Chandra Sinha's Chronicles of Tipporah, p. 5. || Hunter's Statistical Account of Hill Tipperah, p. 465. brated, were first established, has not yet been determined. It is remarkable that they were not visited by Hwen Thsang, the Chinese traveller, nor even by the great Chaitanya who is known to have made a pilgrimage to all the known shrines of his time. There can, however, be no doubt as to their recent establishment. Most of the shrines are supposed to have become endued with morit, only in the Kali Yuga. Among the springs mentioned by Captain Pogson in 1831, is Chandur or Chandra Kund, "said to have appeared within the last four months."\* In a list of objects of antiquarian interest issued by the Government of Bengal, it is said that the temple of Sambhunath was built about 450 years ago, and that of Bárabakunda about 400 years ago, but on what evidence I cannot say. †

Sitakund (Spring of Sita) derives its name from a spring consecrated to Sita, the deified heroine of the Rámáyana. The spring, however, is no longer in existence. A tradition prevails, that there was at one time a dispute between the followers of Vishnu and Siva about the possession of the spring, and that the dispute was referred for arbitration to one Kali Charan Roy, a zemindar and dewan in the

<sup>\*</sup> Captain Pogson's Narrative during a Tour to Chateeguon, p. 204.

<sup>†</sup> A List of the Objects of Antiquarian Interest in the Lower Provinces of Bengal compiled at the Bengal Secretariat under the orders of the Government of India, 1879.

local Collectorate,\* who, it is said, caused the spring to be filled up to terminate the difference. According to another account, the destruction of the spring was effected by the then Mohunta of Sitakund. The present Mohunta informed me that he had made several attempts to restore the sacred place, but that, though he had dug deep all around the site indicated by the sacred books, he could find no trace of the spring. His belief was, that there had been at the place no such spring as is described in the sacred books, and he told me as a reason for this belief, that the place in question was found devoid of all trace of bitumen which was found by him in the adjacent hot springs.†

\* Kali Charan Roy was dewan of the Chittagong Collectorate from 1785 to 1790. He was one of the farmers with whom Mr. Godwin concluded the Settlement in 1774 On the 5th January, 1786, Mr. Crofts, who at that time was Collector of Chittagong, sold his right, title, and interest in the island of Moiscal, for Rs. 40,000 to Kali Charan Roy. The latter was succeeded in the property by his widow Probhabaty, who did not die till 1826. She had no children of her own, but adopted one Chundy Churn, who died in 1820, leaving a son, Shorat Chunder. Shorat being a minor, the estate came, on Probhabaty's death, under the Court of Wards. Shorat Chunder died recently, and the present zemindar is his son, Koilash Chunder. Vide Mr. Cotton's Memorandum on the Revenue History of Chittagong, pages 165-6, and page 223.

† When this paper was read before the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Mr. V. Ball remarked that though it may be true that there never was a hot spring in the locality mentioned, the absence of any trace of hitumen was no proof of its non-existence. Vide Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal for March, 1881, page 51.

Captain Pogson described Sitakund\* as "of pure limpid water," though Bárabakunda is the only spring he actually visited. He, however, subsequently obtained information of the other springs, and sent a careful person to bring a description and some bottles of water from each. The following account quoted by Captain Pogson from a Gazetteer is noteworthy: † " About twenty miles to the north of Islamabad is a remarkable hot well (named Sectacoond), the surface of which may be inflamed by the application of fire. Like all other remarkable phenomena of nature, it is esteemed sacred by the Hindoos, as is likewise another hot spring near to Monghir." As will presently be seen, the spring of Sitakund is described in the Devipurana as hot-watered and igneous, which agrees with the above extract from the Gazetteer. But as Sitakund is also the name of the outpost containing all the groups of springs and shrines at the locality, I think it is unsafe to conclude, that the specific spring Sitakund existed at the time when the passages above referred to were written.1 If the

<sup>\*</sup> Captain Pogson's Narrative during a Tour to Chatecgaon, p 204.

<sup>†</sup> Ibid, page 99.

The popular belief is, that the spring of Sitakund is still in existence. In his clever novel, called Chandranath after the god on the Chandrasakhara hill, the second edition of which appeared last year, Baboo Khettra Pal Chakravarti makes the here visit Sitakund (p. 203) in 1266 B. S., that is, about 25 years age. All old persons, however, who have visited the place, agree in saying that the spring has not been in existence for a much longer time. Baraba-

spring existed in 1831, at the time when Captain Pogson wrote his Narrative, it must have been destroyed in recent times. But the destruction of a spring, held in such an esteem by the Hindoos, would not have failed to attract the notice of the authorities. I am not aware of any official report regarding the destruction of the spring.

The following account is given in the Devipurana\*

of the shrine, and of its destruction :

40-41.—The Rishis said: We have heard before of Sitakund, situate on the mount of Chandrasekhara, a spring known throughout India, which is the purifier of the three worlds. If thou hast any kindness for us, O sun of knowledge, do thou tell us of it, and thereby dispel our ignorance; for about this people ask of us.

42-3.—The Suta replied: For the performance of kunda, and not Sitakund, is about 20 miles to the north of Chittagong.

\* ऋषय कत्तुः।

भीताकुछं त्रुतं पूर्वं विक्षोकजनपायनम् । चन्द्रशेखरमध्यस्यं भारताख्यासमन्त्रितम् ॥ ४० ॥ यदि तेऽसि कपा नाथ तद्द ज्ञानभास्तर । सद्याकमज्ञानम् दर क्षोके प्रस्ता यदीदशी ॥ ४१॥

#### स्त्रत खवाच ।

सीताचानविधानार्थं बीकानास् पावनाय वै। भचागुण्य मचारस्यं तत् कुष्वनु विनिर्कातस् ॥ ४९॥ बाबुवाग्निविभित्रनु निम्मसुर्योदकं दिजाः। स्वातपनायितं दुसैः सर्वीपवनस्त्रिभस् ॥ ४६॥ Sita's ablution, O twice-born ones, and for the purification of men, was made that spring, the most secret and beautiful, volcanic, deep, hot-watered, surrounded by trees as by an umbrella, forming one continuous grove.

44.—In that lake bathed Sitá, born of the Earth, with her husband and brother-in-law, and devoutly offered oblations to her favourite deity.

45.—There also bathed the lions among the twiceborn, as also the chiefs of sages and Munis, who have attained perfection, dwelling to the north of it.

46.—What account shall I give of this spring, the most sanctifying of all? I shall only recount its merits: listen to me, O most excellent of the twice-born.

47.—When Rama, debarred from accession to his father's throne, had gone to the hermitage of S'arabhanga, he went, in accordance with his direction, to a city lying towards the north-east.

यन सीता प्रथियोजा सामिना देवरेण वै। साला तन ऋदे देविमष्टं सन्ताधे यलतः ॥ ४४ ॥ सानं चलुः दिजवात्रा मुनिष्टन्दारकास्त्रया। सिदा सदर्थयः सन्ति तस्त्रोत्तरनिवासिनः ॥ ४५ ॥ किं यक्त्रयं कुष्डप्टनं सद्रापुष्णविधायकस्। यद्यामि नस्य माद्यातांत्र ऋषुष्वं दिजपुत्रवाः ॥ ४५ ॥ राज्यश्रष्टो यदा रामः सरभङ्गात्रमं यथी। तदुपदेशं छला तु पूर्वोत्तरपुरीमगात् ॥ ४० ॥ 48-9.—In that city he saw a revered sage, versed in the knowledge of *Twithas*, a veritable ocean of knowledge, long-armed, clad in yellow garments, and with matted hair. As soon as he saw him, he reverently saluted him with a meek heart, and enquired of him, "Why dost thou, O Lord, live here alone, besmeared with ashes?"

50-51.—That sage, whose whole body was besmeared with ashes, then opening his eyes, saw Rama, the holy, the cternal, the best of men, accompanied by Sita and Lakshmana, and thus addressed him:

52.—"I have heard that thou hast taken thy birth in the line of kings, only for our liberation from the dire bonds of the world.

58-4.- "How great is thy fortune, who art followed

पाग्नेत् पूज्यं महायाक्तं जटामण्डलधारिणम् । पीतवलपरीधानं तीर्थेज्ञं ज्ञानसागरम् ॥ ४८ ॥ हष्टा नला च पप्रच्छ भन्न्या विनयमानसः । कथमन स्थितं देवमहीतं विभ्तिपरम् ॥ ४८ ॥ ततस्व दक्तीलयिला हष्टा रामं सनातनम् । जानकीलक्षणायान्तु पविनं पुरुषोत्तमम् ॥ ५० ॥ खवाचन रघुवरं स मुनिर्विभ्तिषरः । युनं राजन्यवंग्रे तु जन्ममानप्रतिष्ठितम् ॥ ५१ ॥ खसान् पविचकरणे घारसंसारवस्तात् । भावज्ञानं मुन्तिं कुर्वन् लीके जन्म प्रकामितम् ॥ ५० ॥ इयं सीता प्रथिवीजा किसंसिच्चित्संस्ता। सुराराध्या मुक्तकेशी चापवर्गप्रदायिनी ॥ ५२ ॥ यसानुगामिनी देवी तस्य भाग्यं प्रतिष्ठितम् । समुद्रस्योत्तरे तीरे भारतास्त्रासमन्त्वे ॥ ५८ ॥ by this Sita, born of the Earth, with her hair unbound, the dispenser of salvation, worshipped even by Siva.

55.—"On the north side of the Indian Sea, there is a spring bearing her name, well known throughout India, which is the purifier of the three worlds. Know her not merely as thy wife. Verily she is Yoganidrá herself.

56.—"Deeds unaccomplishable by thee can easily be achieved by her; she is destined by the Fates to humiliate thy pride (to eclipse thy glory).

57-60.—"It is through my good fortune alone, O Rama, that thou hast come here with her. On the mount of Chandrasekhara, southwest of this country, was built by Siva, a spring of her name. Behold that spring, Sitakund, glowing with fire, situate on the west of Sambhunath, south of the Vayu hills, north of

खस्या नामा कुष्डमसि त्रिजीकजनपावनस्।
न तय ग्रहिणी राम योगनिदेयिक्यते॥ ४५॥
तवाभक्षं कर्कं यदा खन्यायजीकाछतस्।
तवाभिमाने नहे तु विधिनेषा नियोजिता॥ ५६॥
मम भाग्यवग्राद्राम खन्या समुपस्थितः।
प्राचीद्विषयोर्क्षे श्रीचन्द्रशेखरे गिरी॥ ५०॥
तव भगेष तद्रामा कुष्डमेकं नियोजितम्।
स्यमुपसिमे विप्रासद्ययुगिरिद्विणे॥ ४०॥
नाभिगशोत्तरे चैव फल्गुपसिमतः स्थितः।
खोतिभैयाद्यः प्रतीष्यां वाङ्वाग्निसमन्तिम्॥ ५०॥
प्रमेष तु महाकुष्डं सीतामामा नियोजितस्।
सीता ग्रीतक्षयुक्ता या सेथने सहसारिणी॥ ६०॥

Nábhigangá, west of the Phalgu, below Jyotirmaya. That Sita is thy cheering consort."

61-3.—Thus speaking, the excellent sage fixed his eyes on them. Greatly wondering, Rama passed the night there with his wife and brother, and at dawn visited Chandrasekhara in the company of the well-wishing Muni who, on arriving there, went into the spring, and facing the sun chanted the two-lettered mantra.

64-66.—Then, leaving Rama at the place, there stepped into the spring Sita, the primitive energy, the revealer of the seat of Brahma, adored by Ananta and other gods, blue as a cloud, ever complacent, three-eyed, red-lipped and fair-haired, her form glowing with fire, adorned with eight hands, and surrounded with banner and chamara (yak-tail).

द्रस्युक्ता तं मुनिवरः परस्यरं विकीकयेत्।
जिवला रजनीमेकां रामचन्द्राऽतिविद्युतः ॥ ११ ॥
प्रभातायान् प्रवेद्याम् भावजायासमन्तितः।
ययौ श्रीचन्द्रभेखरं मुनिना परमेष्टिना ॥ ११ ॥
गला मुनिवरस्तव कुण्डमध्ये व्यवस्थितः।
स्दर्याभिमुखमास्थाय जपन्मन्तव द्याचरम् ॥ ११ ॥
रामं विद्याय सा सीता कुण्डमध्ये व्यवस्थिता।
नीनजीमूतसङ्कामा भुजाष्टपरिशोभिता ॥ १४ ॥
केम्।वलम्बनी देवी खर्षदाधरसङ्गिनी।
स्वाचनव्यस्युक्ता ध्वजचामरवेष्टिता ॥ १५ ॥
स्वननादिभिराराध्या ब्रह्मपीटप्रकामिका।
सादिमक्ताः सुप्रसन्ना महायाद्वक्रिपणी॥ १९ ॥

67.—Standing on the margin, Rama saw Sita immersed in the spring. Believing the spring to have destroyed her, dear to him as life, he addressed these words to the Muni:

68-9.—"This spring shall remain in existence for the first four thousand years of the Kali age, and shall after that time vanish from the sight of man. Whoever out of devotion will drink the water, shall obtain the same fruit as may be got by immersion, and shall not live any longer upon earth."

'70-71.—Saying this, the foe of Rávana went to the Mani hill. Having viewed the linga and bathed in the Lavanákhya, he gratified the sage with humble and respectful words, and then returned to Chandrasekhara.

तटस्वा राघवः प्रस्तेत् सीतां कुळनिवासिनीं।

मम प्राणस्यं कुछं विभाय रघुवंग्रजः ॥ ६० ॥

समाय तं मुनिवरिमदं वस्त्रनम्प्रवीत्।

कक्षेश्वतःसस्यायि वर्षाणि स्वस्त्रण्यतम् ॥ ६८ ॥

स्थितं कुछं मुप्तमसीत् मानवादर्गेनं भवेत्।

भिक्तं कुछं मुप्तमसीत् मानवादर्गेनं भवेत्।

भिक्तं कुछं मुप्तमसीत् मानवादर्गेनं भवेत्।

सितं कुछं मुप्तमसीत् मानवादर्गेनं भवेत्।

इत्युक्तासी रावणारिभीणपर्यतम् वैनि॥ ०० ॥

सत्ता स्था सिवसिन्नं स्वयास्यो निम्नज्यम्। 

सामत्य सन्द्रसेखरं प्रसाय मुनिसीखरं।

सन्द्रहतयामास रामे। प्रिविचयान्यतः॥ ०१ ॥

72.—Then Rama, delighted, started with Sita and his brother, for the banks of the Godávarí.

According to the above account, Rama, having visited the hermitage of Sarabhanga, by his direction turned towards a north-eastern city, where another sage informed him, that on the south-west of that city, there was a sacred spring of the name of his consort Sita (Sitakund), who, he was informed to his surprise, was no other than Yoganidra herself. Rama is then said to have visited this spring in the company of his wife and brother and the lcarned sage. Finding Sita immersed in the spring, whither she had gone to bathe without his knowledge, Rama thought she had been drowned, and cursed the spring as the destroyer of the princess. According to the malediction which, be it observed, is not to have immediate effect, the spring would cease to be visible to human eyes, at the end of four thousand years of the fourth age. The Chinnamastá Tantra is, however, ready with another explanation of the origin of the shrine and of its disappearance.\* It

> सीतामादाय सथाता भिजाञ्चनचयोपमा । जमाम परमाद्धादः पुनर्गोदावरी' प्रति॥ ०२ ॥ इति देवीपुराधे चैचमाचातां चण्डिकाख्छे शिवरचस्मक्यने वीत्रीचन्द्रभेखरप्राप्तिरहादशोऽध्यायः ।

भीतानाभिषमं कुण्डं पातालं कुण्डमुत्तमं ॥
 भीतापरीचवाथाय तत्पूर्वेऽग्निः चचार ४ ।
 ततः श्रद्धाप सा सीता परीचानलतापिता ॥

relates that the spring was the scene of the ordeal by fire of Sita, that it was excavated by the hand of the great Hanumat, and that it was cursed by Sita herself as the site of her sufferings. The explanation itself is, however, less important than the manner of its narration. Sita is not described there merely as Yoganidrá herself, or the Primeval Sakti or Energy, and Rama the divine hero who would curb the pride of the Rakshasas. They are the veritable Supreme Duad, the spiritual guides of Siva and his consort who came over to the shrine to offer their oblations. The spiritual guide, according to Hindoo ideas, it is well known, is the embodiment of the Deity itself on earth. The recognition accordingly of Rama and Sita as the spiritual guides of Siva and his consort is significant. A tradition has been mentioned above, which attributes the filling up of the spring to a dispute between the Sivaites and Vishnuvites. It would therefore seem, that this second legend was probably written at a period of Vishnuvite supremacy.

यक्षेत्र निर्मितं कुण्डं परी चार्थं चनूमता।
कुण्डपार्श्वचरो भूका तिष्ठति चनुमान् वस्ती ॥
दिति विद्यमस्तातन्त्रे भग्नकास्त्रीसम्बद्धस्य स्वानिर्मिश्वयस्य स्वानिर्मिश्वयस्य स्वानिर्मिश्वयस्य

However it may have been, apart from the contradictory nature of the two accounts which in itself furnishes a strong argument against their authenticity, both of them-internally incoherent and contradictory as they are-have not the impress of the high authority of Valmiki, the most ancient writer on the life and deeds of Rama, and perhaps the one, who in consequence describes them with the nearest approach to truth. It is true that a few places in the Chittagong Division bear the name of Rama, so that it might apparently seem that the prince had something or other to do with them. There is, for instance, Ramoo, where it is said Rama commenced the Setubandha bridge, but, preferring not to enter by the postern gate the capital of Ravana (to which the bridge would have led him, had he gone that way), he turned round, and constructed a separate bridge at Ramesvara to lead him to the front gate of the metropolis of Ceylon. In the Pátál Puri (lit. the nether world), in a cavern in the hill of Chandranath to which reference will presently be made, a huge stone is pointed out as the cooking ntensil of Sita. Similarly, a place or two in the adjoining districts of Noakhally and the Hill Tracts, may be mentioned as bearing the name of Rama and his wife. This reason, however, does not commend itself as very conclusive. For it is a fact that may be well established by numerous instances, that the Brahmins took delight in associating shrines

with renowned names in their religious history, in order to ensure and enhance their sanctity.\* Regarding Rama alone, thus we read of the Doobrajpore rocks far off in the district of Beerbhoom, consisting of stones that fell off from his aerial chariot on his return from the Himalayas, when he had gone up there to fetch stones for the construction of his bridge to Ceylon. Adjacent places are shown, as where his wife Sita sat and bathed. A boulder in the neighbourhood is also pointed out, as having been caused by Rayana's attending a call of nature. In the same way, Rama's advent is also claimed for the province of Orissa, (wrongly identifying it with Kishkindhyá mentioned in the Ramayana), where the Rajah of Cuttack up to this time wears a tail in all public receptions, more as a testimony to his descent from the monkey allies of the great hero, than by way of vindication of Mr. Darwin's theory. There are

<sup>&</sup>quot;The hot springs of India have attracted the notice of many observers. In the majority of instances these remarkable outbursts of water, at a temperature considerably above that of the waters, or even of the atmosphere in the neighbourhood, often charged with various gases and emitting strong odours, have been endowed by the superstitions and ignorant with wondrons virtues, or have been supposed to be the result of some miraculous interposition of divine energy." Dr Oldham on the Thermal Springs of India, page 1, Part II, Vol. XIX Memons of the Geological burvey of India.

<sup>†</sup> A Last of the Objects of Antiquarian Interest in the Lower Provinces of Bengal, compiled at the Bengal Secretariat under the orders of the Government of India, pages 4-6.

several places bearing the name of King Bálí, the brother of Sugríva, who was treacherously killed by Rama; Bálikáti, a river; Bálikánta, also a river; Bálisahi, a villago. There is also a festival called Báli Játrá. The Sabdakulpadruma also mentions a hill at the place called Kishkindhya.\* Against this identification—plausible as it is—is the unfortunate situation of the river Pampá (in Mysore) which Rama is said to have visited, before entering Kishkindhyá the kingdom of the monkeys which, it would seem, coincided nearly with the present kingdom of Mysore.

It is not improbable, therefore, that the above legends of Sitakund are another of those religiohistorical forgeries so common all over India. Certain it is, that Rama's journey southwards was made through the middle of the Deccan and not through Orissa and the Coasts, much less through Chittagong and Sitakund; the following being the most important places in the hero's itinerary as described by Valmiki: the Tamasá, the Vedasruti, the Gomati, the Ganges, Batsyadesa, Prayága, Chitrakuta, the Mandákini, Dandaka, the Godavari, Krauncha, the Pampa, Rishyamuka, Kishkindhya, and Ceylon. There is absolutely no mention, in the great epic of Valmiki, of Rama having gone so far north-eastward as Chittagong, after having visited the hermitage of Sarabhanga.

<sup>•</sup> किख्तिन्यः पुं चोड्रदेशस्यपर्वतिविशेषः। Sabdakalpadrama, p. 579, Vol. I.

The narrative of this visit is contained in Canto V of Book III. When Rama was about to enter the hermitage of this sage, he saw with the Rishi, Indra the Dreaded Thunderer, in all the paraphernalia of his high office, who disappeared on Rama's nearer approach. Replying to Rama's question, the Muni said that the lord of heaven had been to his hermitage to escort him to heaven, but that the Muni could not comply with his request and leave the earth, before seeing Rama, to whom he offered all the merits of his long penance so that the prince by virtue of them might ascend to heaven. Rama, of course, declined the gift, and requested the sage to point out a meet place for his home. The following is his reply:

"Sutikshna's woodland home is near,
A glorious saint of life austere,
True to the path of duty; he
With highest bliss will prosper thee.
Against the stream thy course must be
Of this fair brook Mandákiní,
Whereon light rafts like blossoms glide;
Then to his cottage turn aside.
There lies thy path, but, ere thou go,
Look on me, dear one, till I throw
Aside this mould that girds me in
As caste the snake his withered skin.\*"

<sup>·</sup> Griffith's Ramayana, Vol III, Book III, Canto V, Page 21.

On the sage giving up the ghost, the holy men who dwelt around flocked to Rama, and solicited his protection against the Rakshasas, which he readily granted. We now come to the Seventh Canto in which Rama is then made to visit this hermitage of Sutíkshna. After the exchange of proper greeting, Rama said:

"But now O saint, I pray thee tell
Where I within this wood may dwell,
For I by Sarabhanga old
The son of Gotama, was told
That thou in every lore art wise
And seest all with thy loving eyes."

In reply to this, the sage begged Rama to take up his abode at his hermitage. Rama passed the night there. On the following morning he asked leave of the sage, and prayed for his permission to explore the Dandaka. The sage answered as follows:

"Go with thy brother, Rama, go,
Pursue thy path untouched by woe:
Go with thy faithful Sita, she
Still like a shadow follows thee.
Roam Dandak wood observing well
The pleasant homes where hermits dwell,
Pure saints whose ordered souls adhere
To penance rites and vows austere.";

Griffith's Ramayana, Vol III, Book III, Canto VII, Page 28.

<sup>†</sup> Griffith's Ramayana, Vol. III, Book III, Canto VIII, Page 32.

Thus it is clear, that there is no mention whatever in the Ramayana, of Rama having passed through Chittagong on his way downwards to the Deccan. The geographical position itself of Chittagong and of the Godavari (to the banks of which Rama in the above legend is said to have bent his way on leaving Chittagong), renders it quite improbable. The attribution of the ordeal by fire of Sita to a hotspring is not a new idea.\* The Sitakund of Monghyr is similarly credited with being the scene of the same ordeal, which, it is scarcely necessary to say, really took place at Ceylon, if the father of Aryan poetry is to be believed. The principle of human nature which led to this religious fabrication, is not, however inexplicable. "I think it is in Macedon," reasoned Fluellen, " where Alexander is porn. I tell you captain,-if you look in the maps of the 'orld, I warrant, you sall find in the comparisons petween Macedon and Monmouth, that the situations, look you, is poth like. There is a river in Macedon; and there is also moreover a river at Monmouth:

<sup>•</sup> In p. 209, Part I, Vol. XVII of the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, General Cunningham mentions a spring called Sitakund in Kelat, which is nine miles from Dwara, and five from Monali. In Mr. Duncan's account of the Travels in Caylon, of a Fakeer named Prann Poery (p. 39, Vol. V of the Asiatic Researches), it is stated that "our traveller states that leaving this tank, he proceeded on to a station called Sectakund, where Rama placed his wife Secta on the occasion of his war with her ravisher Rayan,"

<sup>†</sup> Shakespeare, King Henry V, Act IV, Scene VII.

it is called Wye at Monmouth; put it is out of my prains, what is the name of the other river; put it is all one, 'tis alike as my fingers is to my fingers, and there is salmons in both,"

It is not a little remarkable, that Sitakund, the name of a spring which, no matter whether it existed or not, now exists no longer, should (lucus a non lucendo) give its name to the outpost, and surpass the surrounding shrines in fame. Perhaps during a period of temporary Vishnuvite supremacy, it may have been indiscriminately used for, and may have eventually supplanted, Panchaki ofa which, according to the sacred books, contain all the holy shrines of the place. Like the Panchakross of Benares, it stretches over 5 kroses (or 10 miles) round the village of Sitakund, being bounded\* on the east by the Mandakini, on the west by Vyasakunda, on the south by Barabakunda and on the north by the Champaka Forest. "This land called Panchakrośa," said Vishnu,† "is the cause of the holy Nirvana. Many a

\* पश्चिमे व्यासकुण्डल पूर्व्वे सन्दाकिनी सृता। जमरे चम्पकारको दिल्ले वाङ्गामेलः॥ एतत् चेत्रं मया प्राक्तं पश्चकोमं मचाफलं। इति वाराचीतन्त्रे नारायणीनारायण्यंवादे चन्द्रग्रेखर-वर्णना नाम पष्टः पटलः।

पचक्रीश्रमिदं प्रीक्तं श्रिवनिर्वाणकारणं ॥
 पतस्त्रिज्ञनरे सन्ति कुण्डान्यस्थानि सर्वतः ।
 सुगोष्यानि प्रयत्नेनु मम प्रीतिकराणि च ॥

Ibrd.

spring is contained in it, most sacred and delightful to me." By far the most frequented of these shrines are Vyásakunda, Bárabakunda, Lavanákhya, and the temples of Chandranath and Sambhunath.

The following account is given in the Devipurana\* of the origin of the shrines of Chandranath and of Vyasakunda.

26-27.—"Do thou tell us, O chief of the Brahmins," said the Rishis, "why Siva, forsaking Kasi and Kailas, resides here in secrecy P Why he said, 'I shall dwell on the mount of Chandrasekhara in the Kali Yuga;' and why thy preceptor remains there, abandoning all else?"

28-29.—"In days of yore," the Suta replied, "seeing the three worlds animate and inanimate, pervaded by the sea of curd, and immersed in the waters of causation, the three-eyed lordly spirit created Brahmá and Vishnu for the purposes of creation.

#### \* भ्रहपय कच्:।

वद् विप्रेन्द्र तत्मुर्व्यं कथं गूट्लसागतः। विदाय कार्यो केलाएं कत्मात् श्रीचन्द्रभूपणः॥ १९॥ कली तिष्ठामि रत्युक्तं श्रीचन्द्रभेकरे नगे। कथने गुरुस्तविव चास्तेत्मत् एकलं त्यजन्॥ २०॥

#### स्त ख्वाच।

पुरा दिधचित्रिकेन याप्तं चिभुवनं वरं। कारणचित्रिके नग्नं ब्राह्माण्डं चचराचरम्॥ २८॥ दृष्ट्रा तथाविधं चर्वं भगवान् भूतभावनः। सद्धजे ब्रह्माविय्यूच द्वर्यार्थं जानकः स्वयम्॥ १८॥ 30-31.—"Thus created, they, infatuated with vanity, considered themselves supreme, and genitor even of the womb from which they themselves had sprung. Even in his very presence they spoke slightingly of him. Then the god, disappearing, became an image of light.

32-35.—"From the sky he then addressed the ignorant gods thus: 'O lotus-born, of the thirteen lingas planted in Kási and other places, I have spoken to you of twelve. Only one I have concealed from thee. During the Kali Yuga, O lotus-born, I shall dwell there with Párvatí. There is no doubt of this. Do thou follow us thither with the never-dying gods.' Thus saying, Siva with Umá vanished from their sight, and went to that place.

भूला तौ तस्य निकटेऽच्छारिण विमोचितौ ।

कतवनी स्वर्गम्य स्वरारी तौ यभूवतुः ॥ २० ॥

कत्वनी तस्य प्रमुखे ततः सीऽपि न दम्यते ।

खनादिना तदा सीऽपि चौतिनिर्दं तदाभवत् ॥ ११ ॥

खनावनी तत् ती च उवाच गगनस्थितः ।

येषु येषु च स्थानेषु मिह्नाई स्थापितं मया ॥ २१ ॥

वयोदम्यिभागेन काम्यादिषु च पद्मज ।

इादमं कथितं तुश्चं चित्रमेकं जुगोप च ॥ २१ ॥

कस्मौ तिष्ठामि तनैव पार्वत्या नाच संम्यः ।

यूथं गच्छत तेष्वेव मिष्ठोऽचन् तव च ॥ २४ ॥

ग्रिमेष्यय ततः पद्मादमरिक्तव पद्मज ।

इत्युक्तान्तिर्देतः म्मुस्वनागाद् जमया स्व ॥ २५ ॥

इत्युक्तान्तिर्देतः म्मुस्वनागाद् जमया स्व ॥ २५ ॥



36-37.—Even now the linga may be seen there, called Haragauri. The sinless place remained very secret in the first three ages. For the weal of men, the bull-drawn god dwells in the Kali Yuga in that sacred place with the never-dying ones."

Having thus premised the presence in the sacred place, of Siva and his consort, of Brahma, Vishnu, and other gods, the story then runs as follows:

38.—Once on a time Vyasa, the son of Parás'ara, the subduer of his passions, began to practise asceticism in the company of the wise residents of Kasi (Benares), full of beautude, knowing the Supreme Spirit, and wearing matted hair.

39-42.—Seeing him the son of Matsyagandhá, of unknown lineage, caste, and character, seated with

खयापि दस्यते लिन्नं इरगौरीति संज्ञकम्।
तत् त्रियुगे चातिगृद्धं वासीनीर्थं चानधं॥ २६॥
कली प्रकामकरेण लीकानान्तु हिताय वै।
सक्लेशामरिसीर्थं वसनं (?) तं द्यासनम्॥ २०॥
एकदा वासदेवेऽपि कामीचेनिनासिमः।
तपः कर्तुम् समारेभे पारास्त्र्यः परन्नपः॥ २०॥
महानन्दनिमग्नेशें टामक्कक्षारिभः।
तपसा धौतककुषः व्रक्षविद्धिविविकिभः॥ २८॥
शिवज्ञानाम्नुभिः सर्वं श्वावितं जन्नमादिकम्।
द्वष्टा तीसं संवापाञ्चं नारायण्यितवापरम्॥ ४०॥
जातिग्रीस्विविक्षेतं तं मत्र्यगन्त्रास्त्रम् ॥ ४९॥
कातिग्रीस्विविक्षेतं तं मत्र्यगन्त्रास्त्रम् ॥ ४९॥
कुल्हीनं क्षयं तथ मुनीनासिय तिस्वकम्।
श्रियते च तदा कोपा बासाय चेन्नयासिभः॥ ४२॥

themselves on the same seat, and dwelling in the same holy place, although he was very wise, the ornament of the sages, like unto Vishnu himself, the ire of the holy dwellers was roused against Vyasa.

43-44.—Full of jealousy, Bhigu addressed to him the following words: "Who art thou? Whence dost thou come? Whose son and of what family art thou? Where didst thou formerly dwell? Speak the truth."

45-46.—Vyasa replied: "I am the son of Parasara by Matsyagandhá. I have come here to see you, and to worship the god Visvanath. I would dwell with you, O sages of good actions. Let a seat amongst you be granted to me."

47-48.—While he was thus speaking, Vyasa was interrupted by Bhrigu with these angry and unseemly words: "Hear, O ye Munis, the account of his

तती भ्रमुपतिसन्तु प्रोमाचेथीयुतं वचः ॥ ४२ ॥ भ्रमुखनाच ।

कञ्चम् कुत द्रचायातः कस्य स्त्रनुः क्वलक्ष किम्। कस्मिन्निक्तिः पूर्वे वद सत्यं वचच नः॥ ४४॥

यास जगन ।
पराग्ररस्तोऽस्म् नै मत्यग्रभोदरोद्भवः ।
युद्धान् द्रष्ट्म् र्हायाती विश्वनायस्य सेवया ॥ ४५ ॥
युद्धान् द्रष्ट्म् र्हायाती विश्वनायस्य सेवया ॥ ४५ ॥
युद्धानिस्नु स्हावासं करोति मृनिपुक्षवाः ।
साधुभिः कतकसंभिदीयतो स्थितिद्यमा ॥ ४९ ॥
रत्येवं वायमानसु वचोभिस्नु समस्तिः ।
निरस्तो स्गुणा यासः कामजोधविवर्विभिः॥ ४० ॥
मत्यग्रभास्तस्तं सि प्रमु वाचः क्रुनोज्भितः ।
प्रमुखं मृनयः सर्वे सस्य अवस्यज्ञीर्यनम् ॥ ४८ ॥

birth, and thou too, the son of Matsyagandhá, the disgrace of thy family, listen to my words.

49-53.—"While thy mother, begotten of a fish and with a fishy smell, was a ferry-woman in the Jumna, Parasara one day came to the bank of the river and entered her boat. To the Muni's sight she immediately appeared to be endowed with beauty and grace, breathing perfume, a soul-ravishing maid of sixteen. Seeing her, the Muni became full of desire. Thou art the offspring of this union, and art neither a Kunda, nor a Golaka. How canst thou presume to practise asceticism with us? Go to thy own proper place. Thou shouldst not tarry here for a moment."

54-56.—Hearing these insulting words, Vyasa, the son of Satyavati and Parasara, being irate, thought of sacrificing himself to Siva (thus making Siva

यदा ते जननी चाचीत् यमुनार्था चपैयरी।
भीनजातात् गश्चयुता तरणीग्टकीता मती॥ ४८॥
देवात् पराग्ररखन चागत्य यमुनातटं।
खारखा तरणीं तस्याः मुनेक्ग्रनतः चणात्॥ ५०॥
छमध्या छरमा साति वभ्रवातिमनोरमा।
छगश्चा परेणाब्दीया क्ष्रजावण्यस्युता॥ ५१॥
दश्चा तां चच कामाश्रो रितिमग्नः द्यतस्या।
तनोञ्जवीऽसि सः प्राज्ञः न कुष्णः न च गोलकः॥ ५२॥
सीऽखाभिस्तं तपः कर्तुम् ग्रजोसि कथमन च।
मन्तवं तव खस्यानं न स्त्रे चण्यमन च॥ ५६॥
युत्वा पराग्ररस्तो वचसदात्मनिन्दकम्।
वधं शिवाथ दास्यामि चेतसीदम् विभाव च॥ ५४॥

guilty of his death), and said, "O vile and false Siva, holder of the trident, blue-throated, and hidegermented, why dost thou appear Asiva or inauspicious to me? Why dost thou hurass me so often? This very day I will leave this place."

57.—When he the subduer of his passions was so minded, the bull-drawn and blue-throated god made himself manifest to him the chief of the wise men, and spoke as follows:

58-60.—" Certes thou art a portion of mine, O subduer of thy passions, and learned in the cause of things. There is a seat of mine on Mount Chandrasekhara, very secret, and unattainable even by the gods. There in Chandrasekhara I will always reside in the Kali Yuga with Uma.

खरी शिवाशिवं में च वर्तते ग्रास्थित पुनः।
कथं विङ्ग्ननं में ते नी खक्ष्या जिनाम्मर॥ १५॥
इतो गच्छामि खर्षेव पामराज्ञानवस्य ।
खमर्था विष्ट रत्युक्ता खासः सत्यवती सुतः॥ १९॥
चेवाह रिथेदा गन्तुम् सनस्य पर्यतः॥ १०॥
ववास तं ज्ञानिवरं नी खक्ष्यो व्यध्यजः।
न सन्देशो सदंशस्त्रम् ग्रापु वाचं परन्तप ॥ १८॥
चेवं मेऽखी स मुद्धा तत् देवानासि दुर्कभम्।
मदारस्यं मदामुद्धा वीचन्द्रशेखरं मुने॥ १८॥
देवाभिस्थितं चेवं स्वाग्निकोणेऽसि सन्त्रिवत्।
सदा कन्नी च न्यास्थामि जमया चन्द्रशेखरे॥ १०॥

61-68.—"Know, O Sage, that Chandrasekhara surpasses all other sacred places. It is covered on all sides with branches of trees, which protect it from the sun and rain. The kokilas sing there with sweet voice. In the recesses of the forest dwell the sages, their looks probing the Inmost Cause of the universe; Brahmá and other gods bathe there day and night; and in the hermitages dwell the Rishis, Yakshas, Gandharvas, and Bhairavas. In that forest are trees with flowers and fruits of the six seasons. The forest itself is in one place very deep and secret, and in another place rocky, like the moon half-eclipsed. On the south-west of the forest, O subduer of thy passions, is the Sindhu (the Ocean), the King of all tirthas, to whose embrace the sacred

सर्वेचेवाधिकं विद्धि वीचन्द्रभेखरं सुने।
सर्वेवा दुसमाखाभिन्द्रशादिनं वारितानपं॥ ६१॥
वनप्रियादिभिस्तव कूजिनं सभुरेः खरेः।
ज्ञानिभिस्तव्हर्षेच खीयते महनान्तरे॥ ६१॥
यच ब्रद्धादिभिस्तव खानं चक्रे वचनिंशं।
खवयय समन्ध्रवा यचाय भैरवास्त्रया॥ ६॥।
सिवा महर्षयो यच नित्यतासन् तदावमे।
पङ्खतु-फलपुषाद्येः पाद्पाः सन्ति नहते॥ ६॥।
सप्ततास्त्रातिमुद्धं वनं सर्वर्तुमोभनं।
सन्ये नमविशेषे यत् प्रत्यासज्ञार्जनन्त्रवत्॥ ६॥।
सस्य दिस्त्रात्रां सन्त्रभाविद्याः परन्तपः।
यस्य संस्थानाता मङ्गा भागीरयी दिज्ञ॥ ६६॥
सथा दिसादिभे द्वाद्यः तथा वीचन्द्रभेखरः।
नीचन्द्रभेकरं देवैः सदा खास्यानि चे सुने॥ ६०॥

Ganga offers herself, led by Bhagiratha. As the Himalaya is dear to me, so is Chandrasekhara. There shall I, O Muni, dwell with the gods."

Thus instructing Vyasa, the god then made himself manifest to him in his own proper form which is described at length in the text.

74-78.—"In his own form, O Munis, he then said to Vyasa: "Go there, O most excellent of sages, subduer of thy passions, where I shall dwell with Uma. Thou shalt attain all thy desires; have no doubt about thy success. That seat of mine is the giver of health and wealth, and after death, of salvation. There also dwells the rice-giving Annapurna, delighting in rice and nectar. In this seat of perfection shall I dwell, the lord of Parvati." Saying this to the Muni, the god disappeared.

कलोपरेशं तसी च स वभूव परन्तयः। ग्रजसाठिककुन्देन्दुप्रतिसः कुण्डवीव्यन्नः॥ (८॥

रतैः क्विविशेषेनु भगवानुम्या चत्तः । वस्ति तत्र रत्युक्तं व्यास्य मुनिषुष्रवाः ॥ ०४ ॥ तत्र मुनिषेष्ठ मिल्राः परन्तपः । स्दाभीष्ठं प्राप्युस्ति चेत् रत्यं सिवित्रं संग्रयः ॥ ०५ ॥ मत्त्रेतं मित्रदं सम्ममने च मोचदायनम् । भज्ञपूर्वः निवस्ति सदाज्ञक्यभारिषौ ॥ ०५ ॥ वत्र च स्वंत्रभासे चेद्यद्राचाविन्तासिनौ । रत्युक्तानदेषे मसुः मुनये ज्ञानसाक्तिने ॥ ०० ॥ इत्युक्तानदेषे मसुः मुनये ज्ञानसाक्तिने ॥ ०० ॥ 79-81.—As Nárada had ascended the Srísaila hill, even so went Vyasa, the son of Satyavati, to Chandrasekhara, hearing these words of Siva. There he began to practise asceticism, his mind always concentrated in meditation, repeating the five-lettered mantra, sometimes covered with snow, sometimes near a fire, sometimes fasting altogether, absorbed in Pránáyáma, all his thoughts devoted to the meditation on god.

82.—Pleased at seeing him so devoted, the Selfcreated then appeared to him. "Ask for a boon," he said, "O subduer of thy passions."

83-85.—Having heard this, Vyasa then replied with folded hands—"When the Munis residing at Kasi spoke scornfully to me, it was by thy command O Lord, that I came here. Dwell thou here, as was thy command while in Kasi. This is the dear boon that I ask of thee."

ततः सत्यवती छन्। श्रुला वाक्यं चरस्य तु।
यथी श्रीचन्द्र गेषरं श्रीगीले नारहा यथा॥ ७८॥
जला तपः समारेभे सदा च ध्यानमानसः।
दिसञास्तरः सचिद्रताग्रनसमीपतः॥ ८०॥
निराचारः कदा गेते तद्भावभावनागतः।
प्राणायामगतः कचित् पद्भाच्यरमनुं ञपन्॥ ८०॥
हत्ना तपारतसेव स्वयभुवंधमागतः।
भूत्वा प्रत्यचमवदत् वरं ग्रह्म परन्य ॥ ८०॥
तत् श्रुला भगवान् व्यासः क्षताञ्चलिपुटोऽन्नतीत्।
गर्चितं मे यदा देव मुनिभः काशीवासिभिः॥ ८०॥
ततेपदेशाद् गन्यमभिकेन मया विभो॥ ८४॥
कतं यथोपदेशं मे काशीखेन मदावाना।

86-87.—"Do thou, O sage," the god answered, "remain on the mount Chandrasekhara near the ocean, as the guardian deity of this holy place, and make thyself the saviour of the three worlds by planting over it all the tirthas, such as Gaya and others, that exist on the face of the earth. May all thy desires be successful."

88-89.—With these words, the god, while yet in the presence of Vyasa, pierced the earth with his trident. Then there alose a spring full of water, with igneous brilliance in the interior, and covered with smoke.

90-93.—Delighted at this sight, Vyasa assumed the

तथा भवान गिरिश देशि चैवं वरं सुस्ता। न्यू॥ समस्तीर्वे स्वदान तीर्थाधिष्ठतविषदः। तिष्ठ सिश्रममीपे च श्रीचन्द्रमेखरे सुने ॥ व्हं ॥ गयादीनीय तीथानि यानि मनीय स्तले। तान्यच स्वापयिता तु चैशीक्यतारणं कुर ॥ ८० ॥ सिडिभँवतु तेऽभीषा दत्युक्तासे सपानिधिः। ध तस्य प्रथातः भूषाः निग्रतीन विखन्यते ॥ प्रदा बीऽपि कुछालतिर्स्ता वारिपूर्वी बसूव छ। तस्यान्तरेऽग्रिना दीप्तिः क्रियते धूमवेष्टितः ॥ ८९ ॥ दृष्ट्वानन्दगते। वाससस्य पश्चिमतः स्वयम्। परं धानगतशासे धला पापाणविषदम् ॥ १०॥ दिभ्जमप्रीतच जटामखन्धारियं। चर्माम्बरपरीधानं कवीन्द्रैः सेवितं खबस्॥ ११ ॥ यस्य भाषासिक्सिद्म् वेदमार्गसितं जगत्। वेदागम-मसासिम् निर्मेख ज्ञानदण्डकैः ॥ १२ ॥ प्तात स त विकास्य धर्माधर्मप्रकारकः ॥ ८१ ॥ इति देवीपुराणे चैनमाहात्में खयभुरहस्प्रकचने चण्डिका खखे सप्तद्योध्यायः।

form of stone, and became absorbed in meditation on its west side. Even now he may be seen there, twohanded, wearing the sacred thread, and clotted hair, clothed in deer-skin, the expositor of virtue and vice, who, churning the ocean of Vedic literature with the rod of his knowledge, for the first time explained the whole universe according to the dictum of the Vedas. Let him purify the world."

Such was the origin of the shrine of Chandranath and of Vyasakunda. As in the legend of Sitakund the spring is to vanish from human sight at the end of four thousand years of the Kali Yuga, so in this legend also the shrines are to be manifest to human eyes at the commencement of the same Yuga. In both cases, great names in history have been brought forward to father the foundation of the shrines. Rama, it is known, is the deified hero of the Ramayana. Vyasa, according to the late Mr. Sherring,\* has two or three temples dedicated to him in Benares; but he is not generally considered to be a deified hero. Nevertheless, no name is so distinguished in the whole field of Indian history as the name of this sage. To him is ascribed the compilation of the Vedas and Puranas. To him is attributed the fatherhood of the fathers of the Kauravas and the Pándavas. It is no wonder, therefore, that the sage should have been made to

<sup>\*</sup> Sherring's Sacred City of the Hindus, p. 118.

play the part that he has been made to play in the foregoing passage. This, however, is not the first time, that he has been credited with the ambition of founding a shrine. The Annadámangala relates a like attempt on his part. Expelled by Siva from Kaśi (Benares), Vyasa began to practise extremely mortifying austerities, in the hope of raising a shrine that would, in every respect, surpass the Kaśi of Siva. He had well nigh succeeded in his object, when Uma, Siva's consort, one day appeared before him in the guise of an old, deaf, and decrepit woman, and asked him what merit a man would acquire by dying at his tirtha. Vyasa replied that the man would obtain salvation. But still the old woman pretended not to have heard his answer. and repeated the question again and again. Vexed at this, Vyasa said that the man would become an ass, who died there. Siva's consort, then assuming her own form, said "so be it," and vanished from the place.\* The later attempt of Vyasa to found a tirtha in Chittagong appears to have been more successful. He not only succeeds in conciliating Siva, but also obtains from him the much-desired boon. "Do thou, O sage," the god is made to have said, "remain on

ডাকিয়া কহিলা জোধে কাণের কুহরে।
 পর্দত হইবে বুড়ী এখানে যে মরে।।
 বুঝিনু বুঝিনু বলি করে ঢাকি কাণ।
 তথান্ত বলিয়া দেবী কৈলা অন্তর্থান।।

Annadamangala, p 158. This legend is based on the Kasikhanda of the Skands Purana.

the mount Chandrasekhara near the ocean, as the guardian deity of this holy place, and make thyself the saviour of the three worlds by planting over it all the tirthas, such as Gaya and others, that exist on the face of the earth. May all thy desires be successful."

The pilgrim to the shrines of Sitakund generally takes up his quarters at the lodging-houses of the Adhikáris, a class of Brahmins, who send out emissaries called Pándás to almost every district of the Lower Provinces, in order to persuade people to undertake a pilgrimage to these shrines. These Pándás serve as guides to the pilgrims, and, in the shape of remuneration, get from the Adhikaris their passage-money as well as a portion, generally the fourth part, of their eventual gain; for the Adhikaris, besides the rent of the lodging-houses, also receive whatever the pilgrim offers to the gods, clothes, cows, horses, palkis, silver and gold ornaments,-the kar or the visiting cess, which consists of eight annas only under the District Magistrate's orders, being paid to the Mohunta for the maintenance of the shrines. The earnings of the Adhikaris average Rs. 5,000, and sometimes rise to Rs. 10,000. They have now-a-days found competitors in people of other castes, who also have set up lodginghouses of their own. The most opulent Adhikaris are Ramahari Adhikari, Chandrasekhara Adhikari, Gopinath Adhikari, and Akhil Chandra Adhikari. Hinduism is, however, at a discount in Chittagong.

The few Brahmins that may be found there, are certainly not the ornaments of the learned class. Some excellent rules were framed by Mr. Kirkwood, lately Magistrate of Chittagong, for the construction and ventilation of the lodging-houses. These, together with a hospital erected near the local bazar, have served to prevent the spread of disease which, in former days, used to originate and spread around, from the large concourse of people that assembled at the melas. The Adbikaris have now to take out licenses from the Magistrate to lodge pilgrims, which are refused, if their lodging-houses do not conform with the prescribed rules.

Settling himself in one of these lodging-houses, the pilgrim proceeds to bathe in the Vyásakunda referred to above. This is a small tank, 120 × 90 hands, full of mud and shrubs, the water being so impure that one would abhor the touch of it. I was informed that, small as the tank was, it was believed that no one could swim across it, or throw a stone from one side of it to the other. After bathing in the Kunda which, however, does not indicate any signs of being of an igneous nature as related in the legend translated above, the pilgrim makes offerings to the Bata (Ficus Indica) tree, underneath which Vyasa is said to have performed the Asvamedha sacrifice.\* This tree

<sup>----</sup>वटसभीपतः। धवाससेधमकरोडिविभिनीदरायणः॥ इति श्रीवाराचीतन्त्रे श्रीनारायणीनारायणसंवादे स्तीयः पठछः।

represents the primeval Bata tree, under which the great Vishnu rested before the creation. It serves as the veritable "door-keeper" of the god Chandranath, and is the presiding deity of the plain below.\* It is said never to grow old, and to flower in all seasons for theworship of the god. The pilgrim throws upon the tree-deity clods of earth, of which it is said to be very fond, and circumambulates it. The temple of Vyasa is pointed out, lying on the margin of the spring in a very dilapidated state.

Thence the pilgrim proceeds to the temple of S'ambhunáth, or Svayambhunáth, the Self-created Lord. As you proceed, the mount Chandrasekhara appears before you in full majesty. You feel a presence. No wonder that they said that the gods resided there. Are the Munis still meditating there on God, under the tall pine-trees? Are the gods and nymphs disporting themselves on the hillocks? All the old Hindu associations force themselves on you despite your Western education. The feeling, however, fades away, when you come to the site of the Sítákund mentioned above. According to the Varahi Tantra† there are five Kundas at this place called

क्वं बहुकः खितदचय नन्दी ग्रचे चनायकः।
 निर्विष्ठं क्वर देवेगः प्रचले द्विष्टः सदा॥
 बहुनाक्षो भचाद्यकः र्ययद्वारपालकः।

र्ति योवाराचीतन्त्रं सीनारायणीनारायण्चंवादे स्तीयः पटनः।

ततः पूर्वेषणाद्या वाध्यवैतस्तिधी ।
 समीप विष्णुदेवस्य क्रमदीशस्य पश्चिमे ॥

Stiakunda, Ramakunda, Lakshmanakunda, Brishakunda and Nabhikunda. Sitakund, as related above, is no longer in existence. Small holes are, however, pointed out as the other Kundas. Near them, in an old temple are the images of Rama, Sita, and Lakshmana. These are stone figures, very awkwardly done, unlike the graceful idols of Calcutta.

Jyotirmaya consists of flickering tongues of volcanic flames in the right side of the ascent to the temple of Sambhunath. The flames, it is said, disappear altogether at the touch of the impious. When we visited Jyotirmaya, we found that it had been completely put out; and it was not till the Mohunta of Sitakund, who was acting as our cicerone, brought another light in contact with it, that the tongues could be lighted again. It is said that the flames move about from place to place, sometimes appearing in the temple of Sambhunath, sometimes in other places, and at times burn a whole forest.

> पश्चकण्डान्तितं स्थानं परमं त्रह्मदायकस् । ष्टपकुष्ठं परं यस्य प्राम् न्योतीखरात्मकस् ॥ ततः त्रह्मादयः सुराः नित्यं तिष्ठन्ति पानधे । पातासादुत्यिता देवी मन्ना तत्पूर्यतः क्रमात् ॥ तन्नसं स्पर्धनादेवि सर्वपापान् प्रमुखते । तस्योभरदेमस्य नाभिकुष्ठं मनाचरस् ॥ तस्योभरसमस्य नाथं (१) रामकुष्ठं मने(चरस् । स्वक्षस्य तथेदीष्यां सीनायाः कुष्यम्भमस् ॥

> > द्ति श्रीवाराचीतन्ते श्रीनारायवनारायवी-स्वारं चतुर्थः पटलः ।

The Mohunta told us that, on one occasion when he was coming down from the temple of Chandranath, he was overtaken and scorched by the flames which suddenly appeared in great force, on the way between him and the temple of S'ambhunath. When we visited Chandrasekhara, we found that a considerable portion of the forest on both sides of our way, had been recently burnt down by the fire. Some portion or other of the range of mountains always exhibits traces of the flames. At night, we witnessed an extensive conflagration on a distant hillock. Lord Teignmouth was probably referring to Jyotirmaya, when he wrote the following: "On the side of a hill distant about three miles from the burning well (Barabakunda), there is a spot of ground, of a few feet only in dimensions, from which flashes of fire burst on stamping strongly with the foot. The appearance of this spot resembled that of earth on which a fire had been kindled. I do not recollect whether it was hot to the touch."\*

The linga S'ambhunáth, the self-created lord, is said to form part of the body of the hill. A tradition is told that one of the kings of Tipperah made great endeavours to dig it out from the shrine, in order to earry it over to his capital, but without success. He was directed, it is added, by the god to content himself with the goddess Tripurásundarí, whom he accordingly took over to his kingdom.

Lord Teignmouth's Memoirs of Sir William Jones, Vol II. p. 56.

In the history of Tipperah written by Baboo Kailas Chandra Sinha,\* we certainly read of king Kumara Kaving gone to visit a linga in Syamalanagar, which the historian considers to be identical with Chittagong. We also read of his grandson king Taksharao, who was a devout worshipper of Siya, but had failed to obtain a son through the influence of the god, having wounded the god in his feet. Offended at this treatment, the god is said to have left Tipperah. But it is also related that king Taksharao then propitiated the irate god with a human sacrifice, and got two sons by his influence. It is not impossible, that this statement may have connexion with the attempt to transplant the linga Sambhunáth; but an old officer belonging to the Chittagong Collectorate informed me, that the belief that the linga formed part of the body of the mount was groundless,-it being a movable stone having artificially imprinted on it in wax the marks of natural lingahood +- and that the temple was purposely kept dark to avoid detection. Mr. Caspersz. the Assistant Magistrate, who was deputed in 1879 to superintend the Siva Chaturdasi mela, proposed

\* Babu Kailas Chandra Sinha's Chronicles of Tipperali, p. 5. र्भ नानाच्छिदसमायुक्तं मानावर्षसमन्वितस् ।

बहरम् छं यक्तिप्रं वर्तमं भृति सम्मते । तिक्रकृत्व सम्भूतमपरं सम्बण्यतम् ॥

दति विदान्तमेखरः।

Vide p. 257 of the Pranatoshini.

to the District Magistrate the opening of an aperture in the dome, to serve as a skylight which would prevent people from looking in, as well as give light and air. The well-meant suggestion could not, I believe, be carried out, as it was necessary to avoid what might have been misunderstood as uncalled for interference on the part of Government. The temple of Sambhunath was erected down below in the plateau of the hill, as the ascent to that of Chandranath is not practicable throughout the year, especially in the rainy season which is somewhat long in that part of the country, owing to its being hilly. It consists of two apartments. In the outer apartment are the Bhairava, Rama, Sita, Lakshmana, Hanumat, Annapurná and others. The presiding deity is in the inner apartment, and is of course, very superior. "The sight of the face of Kramadisa (another name of Sambhunath) saves one from future birth."\* The linga is of a cylindrical form, about four inches in diameter, and rising about five inches from a cone, the base of which has been walled around.

In the court-yard of the main temple of S'ambhunáth are many minor shrines crumbling to decay. There is a temple of Káli, the dread consort of

असदीशमुखं दृष्टा पुनर्जवा न विद्यते।
 इति श्रीवाराचीतन्त्रे नारायणीनारायणसंवादे
 चन्द्रशेखरवर्णना नाम यहः पठला।

Siva; a mandir of Jagannáth, and Rádhá Krishna; and mount Govardhana so well known in Brindavana. Close by are the eight Bhairavas, and the burial places of some of the Mohuntas of Sitakund. On the left, after passing Sambhunáth, is a sacred spring with puoca sides called Gyakunda,-which is considered equal in merit to the famous shrine at Gaya,-where the pilgrim shaves and bathes, and offers oblations to the manes of his ancestors. Proceeding upwards, the path becomes a mere track, with no attempt at being a regular road such as leads up to S'ambhunath. We now come to the base of mount Chandrasekhara. The grand staircase-consisting of about 575 steps, and generally supposed to have been built by one of the kings of Tipperah, -which brings the pilgrim to the temple of Chandranáth at the top of the Chandrasekhara hill, is giving way a little here and there; and unless repaired in time, will render the ascent more difficult in future than in the days before their construction. Chandrasekhara\* is the highest peak in Chittagong, being 1155 feet in height, and is situate in the centre of the Sitakund range which, commencing from the

<sup>\*</sup> Chandranáth is the name of the god. The peak is called Chandrasekhara. It is also sometimes called Chandranáth. Dr. Hunter also calls it Chandmath. Although Chandmath is another name of Siva, I have never heard the hill called by that name. It is, however, usual to use Chandranath and Sitakund as synonymous terms.

northern end of the Sudder station of the district, runs without interruption to Tipperah, parallel to the Grand Trunk Road. In the Nirvána-tantra\* it is mentioned as one of the Kulaparvatas or principal mountains of India. Wilson in his Dictionary erroneously places it in Arracan. "In the hill of Sitakund there is a stone of two descriptions, one apparently of volcanic formation, and porous, the other solid containing iron." The hill is "formed of a stratum inclined at an angle of 80° north-east and south-west, of hard clay in places; and in others of sandstone. The surface is generally covered with loam, but on the southern slopes of all the outskirting hills, it is red sandstone or sand. " The original temple on this peak, built by a king of Tipperah, fell down in the cyclone of 1848, when the present structure, which is of smaller dimensions, was erected by Ram Sundar Sen, a rich merchant, who has since fallen from his high estate. The temple has little pretensions to artistic beauty. But the view around the peak was exceedingly beautiful. A ship that was sailing far off in the Bay of Bengal, appeared like a bird slowly flying on the horizon.

> नीसाचलं मन्दरच पर्यंतं चन्द्रशेखरम् ।
>  चिमालयं सुवेलच्च मलयं भसापर्यंतम् ।
>  चतुष्कीयो वसेदेवि रतत् सप्रकुलाचलम् ॥
>  इति विर्वायतन्ते सर्वतन्त्रीत्तमोत्तमे चरगौरी-संवादे शागविवरणं नाम चतुर्थं। पटलः ।

<sup>†</sup> Statistics of the Lower Provinces of Bengal for 1868-69, p. 25

ascent of the hill itself, it is said, gives salvation.\* The god, however, is an ordinary linga. Sitakund was, as stated before, visited by Sir Joseph Hooker. The following is an extract from the account given by him in page 352 of Vol. II of his Himalayan Journals: "The road to the top of Seetakund leads along a most beautiful valley, and then winds up a cliff that is in many places almost precipitous, the ascent being partly by steps cut in the rock of which there are 560 (9). The mountain is very sacred, and there is a large Brahmin temple on its flank; and near the base a perpetual flame bursts out of the rock. This we were anxious to examine, and were extremely disappointed to find it a small vertical hole in a slaty rock, with a lateral one below for a draught, and that it is daily supplied by pious pilgrims and Brahmins with such enormous quantities of ghee (liquid butter), that it is to all intents and purposes an artificial lamp; no trace of natural phenomena being discoverable." I do not know to what flame Dr. Hooker thus alludes. Jyotirmaya is at the foot of the hill, and is also visited by pious pilgrims. But there can be no doubt that it is a natural phenomenon.

In order to visit Virupáksha, a phallic symbol of

श्रीचन्द्रशेखराराचे मुक्तिमान्नाति मानवः॥
 द्रित श्रीवाराचीतन्त्रे नारायणीनारायण्यंवादे
 चन्द्रशेखरवर्णना नाम पठः पठसः।

Siva (similar to Chandranath and Sambhunath, mentioned above), in a temple situated midway down the descent from Chandrasekhara, the pilgrim descends by a north-east route. Many proceed to Chandranath after visiting Virupáksha. The ascent to this temple from the foot of the mountain is not a pleasant affair. Sometimes you have to take a long leap, holding in your hand the frail root of an old tree. If it gives way, you are at once precipitated into the abyss below, which seems unfathomable. On his way to Chandranath from Virupaksha, the pilgrim visits Unakoti Sivalinga in a picturesque spot called Pátála Puri, or the nether world, covered with green foliage, and full of the beauties of nature. The undulations in the rocky surface of the cave. drenched with water issuing from the sides of it, are pointed out as Unakoti or 99 lacs of Sivas. What Mr. Sherring said of its prototype in Benares applies to this: "The actual number cut out on the superficies of the stone is not more than a few hundred; but the Hindoos are not particular in their definition of numbers."\* Descending from Virupáksha, we meet the former road again at the Mandálini. This stream is considered to be identical with the river in heaven of the same name. It is said that the Ganges on starting from the Himálaya divided itself into three streams, one running through heaven called Maudskini, another

<sup>.</sup> Sherring's Sacred City of the Hindoos, p. 100.

flowing on earth called Gangá, and the third Bhogavatí, which is in the nether world. The water of the stream is certainly very clear, cool, and sweet.

Of the other shrines, Bárabakunda is a volcanic well. It is about three miles' journey southwards from the Sitakund village, and is situated in the same range of hills. Báraba fire, according to ancient mythology,\* originated from the anger of the Muni Aurva, whose mother's womb was about to be ripped open by the Kshatriyas. It was deposited in the bed of the sea, to prevent it from burning the three worlds. It is stated in the Varahi Tantra; that Baraba is the veritable fire which sprang from the third eye of Siva and destroyed Káma, and that it is to burn down the three worlds at the final annihilation. The same Tantra also relates that the spring s four cubits square, with tepid water, and that the

\* ततसं क्रोधसञ्चातं खैं।व्यांऽग्निं वरणास्यः । एत्ससर्जं स स्वाप उपयुक्ते मसोदशे ॥ ११ ॥ मस्दयग्रिता भूता यसदेदविदी विदुः । तमग्निमुद्गिरद्वक्कात् पिवत्यापा मसोदशे ॥ ११ ॥ द्रति श्रीमसाभारते सादिपलेणि सेन्दरयपर्व्यणा-व्यापास्थानेऽगीत्यधिकमततमोऽध्यायः ।

चयभिरः = बड़वामुखस्। इति भारतभावदीपाष्ट्राभारतटीकार्या नीस्वकष्टः।

† यागनेवान्तसञ्चाता जलमध्ये च दुवैषः।

कान्ता भक्त च संनीता येन नेवाग्निमा पुरा॥

जिलोकं दच्चते येन समुद्रसैन ग्रास्तते।

यगान्ते दच्चते तेन बच्चाप्टं सचराचरम्॥

वाराश्चाम् सप्तमः पटसः।

fire consists of seven flames.\* The following account of the spring is given by Lord Teignmouth: + "The burning well is situated about twenty-two miles from Chatigan, at the termination of a valley surrounded by hills. I visited it in 1778, and, from recollection, am enabled to give the following account of it :- the shape of the well, or rather reservoir, is oblong, about six feet by four, and the depth does not exceed twelve feet. The water, which is always cold, is supplied by a spring, and there is a conduit for carrying off the superfluity; a part of the surface of the well, about a fourth, is covered with brick-work, which is nearly ignited by the flames, which flash without intermission from the surface of the water. It would appear that an inflammable vapour escapes through the water, which takes fire on contact with the external air; the perpetuity of the flame is occasioned by the ignited brick-work as, without this, much of the vapour would escape without conflagration. This was proved by taking away the covering of brick-work after the extinction of the heat, by throwing upon it the water of

तस्य दिखणता देवि कुण्डं वाड्वमंत्रकम् ।
 क्रोमाने विद्यते कुण्डं चतुर्देशं सुगोभनम् ॥
 भप्तिकात्मका विकः मृत्तिकेश्वरमित्रिधा ।
 तळाखमीयद्याच तनाग्नः गिवद्यपणः (२) ॥

वाराश्चास् सप्तसः पटलः।

<sup>+</sup> Lord Teignmouth's Memoirs of Sir William Jones, p. 55.

the well. The flames still continued to burst forth from the surface, but with momentary intermissions and the vapour was always immediately kindled by holding a candle at a small distance from the surface of the water. A piece of silver placed in the conduit for carrying off the superfluous water, was discoloured in a few minutes, and an infusion of tea gave a dark tinge to the water."

Compare with the above, Captain Pogson's description of the spring-"In front is a building about thirty feet square, over the spring; the descent to it, by a flight of steps, is about fifteen feet; the rising heat was like that of a hot bath. Flames, in successive flashes, were playing on the surface of the water, which, from a column of perpetually rising bubbles, appeared to be boiling. The air they contained, ignited as it came in contact with an ovenlike furnace, which the flames fed, and rendered, on one side red-hot. The heat of this self-ignited furnace rendered the surface of the water tepid, but it is naturally cold. In order to condense, and thereby perpetuate, the flames, about one-half of the spring is built over, with an aperture in the centre of the arch, through which, looking from the terrace above, the flames are seen playing on the water. Persons bathing, took in their hands and on their clothes the water with the flame burning on it. The uncovered part is a square of less than five feet, and the covered part about the same dimensions. The water is brackish, sulphureous, and chalybeate. A servant drank as much of it as he could hold in both hands united, twice filled, and was so severely purged, that he remained behind, and laid down until its effects went off ....... The water of the Balwa koond has an exhilarating effect, occasions a slight headache, and a sensation of fulness, which soon go off. Its effects are diuretic, slightly aperient, and creative of hunger."\*

The well outside the Kunda, formed by water issuing from the spring, is called Básikunda. Here the devotee first bathes and purifies himself. He then bathes in the Bárabakunda itself inside, and offers bel leaves and flowers to the flames to appease the burning god. It is said that at each offer of the bel leaves and flowers, the god roars louder to express his satisfaction. Close by are Dadhibhairava; the temple of Jvalakálí; and the spring of Kumárí.

At a nearly similar distance and similarly situated is Lavanákhya, the Nuclukka of Captain Pogson and the Naldala Khya of Statistical Report of 1868-9, which differs from Barabakunda in the weakness of its flame and in the increased saltness of its water. The salt-water is used for cooking purposes, though it is said that the salt cannot be eliminated from the water. A tradition prevails that this was tested

Captain Pogson's Narrative during a Tour to Chatesgaon,
 p. 203.

by Mr. Harvey\* when he was Collector of Chittagong, and that he accordingly discharged some persons arrested for illicit manufacture of salt. The water, it is said, cures goitre. Around Lavanákhya are the following: Dadhikunda, a small well fed by the stream issuing from Lavanákhya; Gurudhvani, another Jyotirmaya; Brahma Kunda, a hot spring on the top of a small hill, east of Lavanákhya; Suryakunda, a phenomenon similar to Lavanákhya and Bárabakunda.† Near Lavanákhya a place is shown as where the right arm of Sati, the consort of Siva, fell, cut by the discus of Vishnu. But no idol is seen there, and it is not held in the same veneration as Kálighat, Kámákhyá, and similar places.

Dr. Oldham thus epitomizes Captain Pogson: "There are soven other springs within a circle of

\* Mr. John Inglis Harvey was Collector of Chiltagong from 1831 to 1837, with short intermessions, during which he acted as Commissioner of the Division. Vide Mr. Cotton's Memorandum on the Revenue History of Chittagong, pp. 118-121.

† There are Mohuntas at the temple of Sambhunath, Baraba-kunda, and Lavanakhya. Of these, the Mohunta of Sambhunath is the richest and the most well-known. He is generally called the Mohunta of Sitakund. The present Mohunta of Sitakund, whose name is Kis, or Ban, is a young gentleman of excellent manners, and of good education. He is also the Mohunta of Kdinath, in the island of Moiseal. Of this god the same story is told as of that at Vaidyanath, near Deeghur. The Mohuntas have to take a vow of celibacy, and are succeeded by their principal disciples.

six miles, called Nuolukka (Lavanákhya), Kosaree (Kumári Kund), Dadhee (Dadhi), Burma (Brahma), Suruj (Súrya), Chandur (Chandra), and Seeta (Síta). Nuolukka is warm, vapour ignites on the application of flame, saline; Kosaree is hot, saline, sulphureous, and chalybeate; vapour ignites. Dadhee, water is cold, salt. Burma (Brahma?) very hot and saltish, slightly chalybeate, vapour ignites. Chandur or Chander is on a hill, salt and exceedingly hot ('said to have appeared within the last four months') ignites; Seeta is pure and limpid.\*"

From Lavanákhya the pilgrim proceeds to Sahasra-dhárá, a cataract. The water falls beautifully in thin streams, so as to form a natural shower-bath, from a height of about 400 feet. This is by far the most picturesque and romantic of all the various and wonderful sights of Sitakund. It is customary for pilgrims to stand under it. The water of Sahasra-dhárá is considered to be Siva himself. One cannot forget the bath at Sahasradhárá. It is said, that on the words "bom bom," which are peculiar to Siva, being pronounced, the water falls with gradually increasing force.

The places noted before are those generally visited by pilgrims. There are many others, for the locale of which the curious and the religious will refer to the Váráhí Tantra, the Bradshaw of the shrines of

<sup>\*</sup> Memoirs of the Geological Survey of India, Vol. XIX, Part IJ, p. 59.

Sitakund. From what has been said above, the reader who has had patience to follow us to the end of this book, will, it is trusted, be convinced of the recent character of these shrines. There is a sustained effort to plant on this place all the tirthas which are held in esteem by the Hindoos. For the most famous shrines of Benares, of Gaya, of Brindavan, of Puri, and other places, miniature tirthas are pointed out in Sitakund.\* The remarkable phenomena which nature presents in the place, have aided the fabrication of superstitious interpolations and forgeries. The sacred writings, which have been quoted before, bear evident indications of the alternate supremacy of the Sivaites and the Vishnuvites, and of the gradual multiplication of the shrines esteemed by each sect. But the belief in their sacredness is firm, deep-rooted, and universal. A man who holds a different opinion, is looked upon as irreligious and sacrilegious, even in Chittagong, where Hindooism is at a discount. Whether on account of their recent establishment, or from any other cause, the shrines have not received attention at the hands of the antiquarian and the scien-

<sup>\*</sup> There seems to be no end of places called Sitakund. In p. 23 ants and footnote, it has already been stated that there are three \* more Sitakunds, besides the Sitakund in Chittageng, vis., those at Menghyr, Kelat, and Ceylon. In pages 22 and 35 of Vol. XVI of Cunningham's Archwological Report, there is mention of another Sitakund situate on the River Gandak in Tirhut.

tist. In these pages they have been described by a layman. But the antiquarian and the scientist will be able to ascertain the time when these shrines were first established, and how they gradually expanded. They will be able to ascertain the effect of the waters of the several springs, and analyze the medicinal virtues, which they are believed to possess. They will be able to ascertain the extent of the Hindoo occupation of the district, and of its conquest by the king of Tipperah. They will, in short, be able to complete the ancient history of Chittagong, which is now so meagre and unsatisfactory.



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